



## *WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT COMPACT FLUORESCENT LIGHT BULBS*

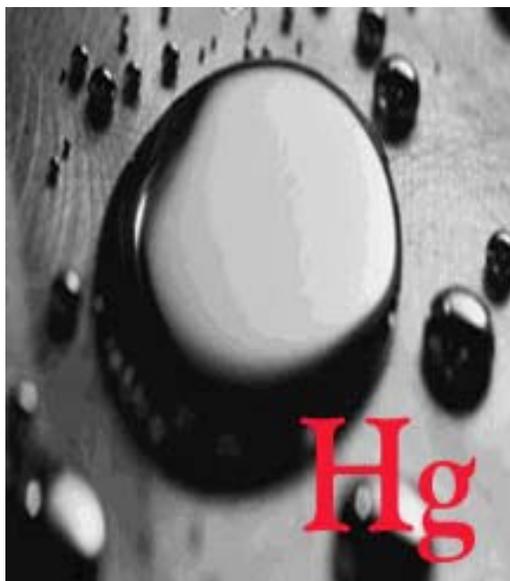
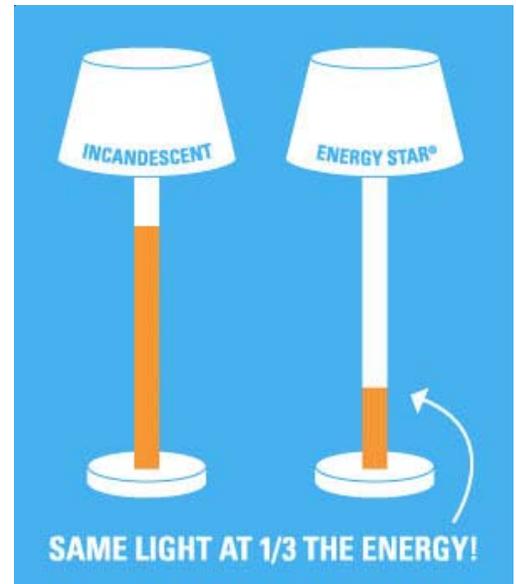


### **THE BENEFITS**

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Energy, if every American home replaced just one light bulb with an ENERGY STAR<sup>®</sup> compact fluorescent light (CFL) bulb, enough energy would be saved to light more than 2.5 million homes for a year and prevent greenhouse gases equivalent to the emissions of nearly 800,000 cars.

The good news is that the use of CFLs in households across the country grows every day. This is in large part due to consumers' interest in responsible energy use. A few benefits of CFLs include:

- Use at least 2/3 less energy than standard incandescent bulbs to provide the same amount of light, and last up to 10 times longer.
- Save \$30 or more in energy costs over each bulb's lifetime.
- Generate 70 percent less heat, so they're safer to operate and can cut energy costs associated with home cooling.



### **THE MATTER OF MERCURY**

CFLs contain about 5 milligrams of mercury - an element that, if breathed and absorbed by the body, can cause neurological damage. Mercury is an essential, irreplaceable element in CFLs and is what allows the bulb to be an efficient light source. By comparison, older home thermometers contain 500 milligrams of mercury, and many manual thermostats contain up to 3,000 milligrams. It would take between 100 and 600 CFLs to equal those amounts.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Energy assure that CFLs are safe to use in your home. No mercury is released when the bulbs are in use, and they pose no danger to you or your family when used properly. However, CFLs are made of glass tubing and can break if dropped or roughly handled. Be careful when removing the lamp from its packaging, installing it or replacing it.



Take the ENERGY STAR **Change a Light Pledge**  
Change just one light and see how a small step can make a big difference.

# WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT COMPACT FLUORESCENT LIGHT BULBS (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1.)

## PROPER HANDLING AND DISPOSAL

Due to the mercury content in CFLs, consumers must be sure to properly dispose of CFLs as they would paint, batteries, thermostats and other hazardous household items. **DO NOT THROW CFLS AWAY IN YOUR HOUSEHOLD GARBAGE IF BETTER OPTIONS EXIST.**

Contact your local county solid waste coordinator for more information about collection centers in your area that may accept CFLs for recycling or disposal. The Kentucky Division of Waste Management provides an [online list of solid waste coordinators in Kentucky](#). For questions, call (502) 564-6716.

Because there is such a small amount of mercury in CFLs, your greatest risk if a bulb breaks is getting cut from glass shards. Research indicates that there is no immediate health risk to you or your family should a bulb break and it's cleaned up properly. You can minimize any risks by following these proper clean-up and disposal guidelines:

- Sweep up—don't vacuum—all of the glass fragments and fine particles.
- Place broken pieces in a sealed plastic bag and wipe the area with a damp paper towel to pick up any stray shards of glass or fine particles. Put the used towel in the plastic bag as well.
- If weather permits, open windows to allow the room to ventilate.



[www.energystar.gov](http://www.energystar.gov)

## OTHER RESOURCES

Following are links to Web sites that provide more information about the proper use and disposal of compact fluorescent light bulbs. These resources also further address the issue of mercury and mercury content in CFLs.

[WWW.ENERGYSTAR.GOV](http://WWW.ENERGYSTAR.GOV)

[WWW.EARTH911.ORG](http://WWW.EARTH911.ORG)

[WWW.LAMPRECYCLE.ORG](http://WWW.LAMPRECYCLE.ORG)

[WWW.NEMA.ORG/LAMPRECYCLE/EPAFACTSHEET-CFL.PDF](http://WWW.NEMA.ORG/LAMPRECYCLE/EPAFACTSHEET-CFL.PDF)

## KPPC's ENDORSEMENT

The Kentucky Pollution Prevention Center (KPPC) is among the hundreds of organizations that have joined the federal ENERGY STAR® program as an ENERGY STAR® Partner. As such, KPPC provides information about products and services endorsed by the ENERGY STAR program through its services and targeted campaigns. Although KPPC strives to provide the most thorough and accurate information about best environmental management practices, KPPC is **NOT** a regulatory agency and therefore cannot speak authoritatively on environmental regulations/compliance issues that concern the use/misuse of compact fluorescent light bulbs or general handling and disposal of mercury/mercury waste.

The information in this document was obtained from the [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency](#), the [U.S. Department of Energy](#), the federal ENERGY STAR® program, [Earth 911](#), [Lamprecycle.org](#) and the [National Electrical Manufacturers Association](#). KPPC acknowledges that other resources exist, which provide both similar and conflicting information and encourages the readers of this document to thoroughly research and understand all information regarding proper use, handling and disposal of compact fluorescent light bulbs and any other product that contains mercury.

For questions about environmental regulations/compliance issues in the southeastern United States, contact the [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 4](#) at (800) 241-1754. For questions about environmental regulations/compliance issues in Kentucky, contact the [Kentucky Division of Compliance Assistance](#) at (800) 926-8111. For questions about the [Kentucky Pollution Prevention Center's](#) services, programs and partnerships, call (800) 334-8635, extension 8520965.

